


You Are What You Live


Socio-cultural Theory



Mask of Emotion

The Same But Different


- Polish: "I have lived here for 50 years and I'm not completely comfortable with American emotions. They smile all the time and say they are happy"
- Dutch: "The Americans and the English when they do something wrong they say they always say they are sorry. But they do not feel sorry."
- Italian: "The Scandinavians have very little emotion."
- Swedish: "Still waters run deep."
- Finnish: "I'm suspicious of people who don't control their emotion, especially in public"
- Japanese: "If a friend insults you, you smile politely and try at all costs to avoid confronting your friend."



Come ti senti oggi?

Social Construction of Emotion


- Grows out of anthropology/ sociology/ philosophy
- Rejects the nativist view (innate)



- Most human states and conditions are societal constructions to serve the overarching goals of the society
- Emotion is constructed **by** the culture **for** the culture
- James Averill
- Emotion: a transitory social role based upon individuals appraisal of the situation and is interpreted as passion rather than action
 - The components of emotion are decoupled and 'controlled' by cultural norms
 - The norms are learned/ taught
 - The individual does not experience emotion until they have learned these interpretations

Averill studied with Lazarus

Cognitive Theory



Social Constructionist Theory

- Appraisal/ evaluation causes emotion
- Situations predictably shape appraisal
- Appraisal patterns are universal
- Appraisal patterns are inborn

therefore

- Components of emotion 'cling' together tightly

- Appraisal/ evaluation causes emotion
- Situations predictably shape appraisal
- Appraisal patterns are variable
- Appraisal patterns culturally shaped

therefore

- Components of emotion vary immensely
- Culture/ socialization determines the variance

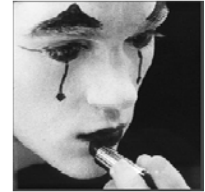
Emotion as Passion

- Cultural Myth of Emotion – it seizes us/ happens **TO** us
 - Gripped by fear/ paralyzed by anxiety
 - Fall in love/ overcome by happiness
- Averill – “The myth is not true”
 - Emotions are actions
 - We choose them to accomplish important goals
 - We do them willfully
 - We only **experience** them as beyond control
- Examples: anger & love
- In ‘passion’, we can engage in untoward behavior with less censure



Emotion as a ‘Role’

- Socially prescribed set of responses to be followed in a given situation
- Culture influences
 - Interpretations of situations
 - India it immoral to kill cows
 - Understanding of emotions
 - Asian cultures ‘good’ and ‘bad’ emotions are intertwined
 - Acceptable expressions of emotion
 - Finland its inappropriate to show ‘large’ emotions
 - Approaches to regulation
 - Japanese babies are calmer due to socialization



A look at Anger

- Averill
 - Highly sophisticated social role
 - Serves to regulate human interpersonal behavior
- Infants and animals cannot express it
 - Requires social and cognitive sophistication



Averill’s work on Anger

- What prompts it?
 - Frustration
 - Loss of self worth due to actions of others
 - Violation of expectations
 - Violation of rules of conduct
 - Property damage
 - Physical injury
- 66% or more subjects
- 20% or less subjects
- What is typical reaction (in relationship)

retribution	◦ Verbal aggression	49%
	◦ Physical aggression	10%
	◦ Displaced aggression	26%
	◦ Reporting the ‘offender’	34%
reconciliation	◦ Calming down	60%
	◦ Talking things over with someone	59%
	◦ Talking to the ‘offender’ calmly	39%
- 63% believe anger improves relationships ultimately
Anger is an emotion important in regulating relationships

What is 'culture'?



Meanings, conceptions, interpretive schemes that are brought 'on-line' through participation in normative social institutions and practices and that influence emotion/ behavior/ cognition. – Richard Shweder, 1993

Your culture

- The shared meanings around you shape you through
- Your involvement with people and institutions and
- Impact what you think/ feel/ do

Interesting Study

- North & South American Students
- Completing questionnaires
- Inconvenience another student (confederate) twice
- Confederate calls them an 'asshole'
- Observe reaction to insult

- South American Students
 - Pride hurt more by the insult
 - Respond with dominance behavior
 - Higher cortisol response
 - Higher physiological reaction



We can presume culture has shaped the interpretation of and reaction to this provocation

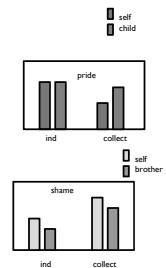
Understanding Culture



Individualistic <i>Squaky wheel gets the grease</i>	Collectivistic <i>Nail that stands out gets pounded down</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual uniqueness • Personal rights • ambition • Independent self concept • Value self expression • Think about own feelings • Talk about self 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group supersedes individual • Group belonging • Social harmony • Interdependent self concept • Value emotional moderation • Think about how other feel • Talk about social connections

Impacts on Emotion


- Individualism/ Collectivism
- Display
 - Individualistic – stronger facial expression
 - Collectivistic – subtle facial expression
 - Explained as intensity of SNS
- Experience
 - Self conscious emotions
 - Child/ self accepted to prestigious university
 - Indiv: equally proud
 - Collect: more proud if child
 - Self/ brother caught cheating
 - Indiv & Collect: more ashamed if self caught
 - Collect: higher levels of shame overall



Understanding Culture ... 2


How much inequality is viewed as legitimate?

Vertical Power	Horizontal Power
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply strict leadership rules Power is centralized/ not equals Value tradition/ prescribed roles Harmony; knowing one's place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply democratic practices Consider each other equals Value autonomy/ expression Mastery; self assertion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High status: express more anger less sadness/ fear Low status: submissive emotior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less pronounced differences based on status




Understanding Culture ...3

Linear Epistemology <small>Entitled to the Pursuit of Happiness</small>	Dialectical Epistemology <small>Happiness is Unhappiness</small>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Western/ Aristotle Can know truth Truth is constant/ unchanging Right to strive for happiness Happiness is valued/ sadness is a failure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eastern/ Buddhist & Taoist Truth is fluctuating Truth is changing/ dynamic All things are interrelated Things can be true AND false Striving for happiness is undesirable Happiness can disrupt group harmony (jealousy) Negative emotion has value




Impacts on Emotion

- Linear/ Dialectical
 - Mixed feelings (neg & pos) – more common in eastern culture
 - Couples study
 - Asian and European
 - 4 conversations (teasing, a worry, past lover, first date)
- Levels of praise/ criticism the same across groups
- European couples : felt one emotion during each conversation
- Asian couples: felt mix of emotion, typically love and an negative emotion



Lost in Translation

- Importance of language
 - How we talk about emotion has a major impact on how we experience them
 - 'climbing into love' –
 - Amae (Japan) – dependent love; desire to put oneself into a childlike state with the lover and 'merge'
 - Litost (Czech) – state of torment & desire for revenge causee by sudden insight into misery
 - Schadenfreude (German) take pleasure in someone else's loss
- Language varies vastly across cultures
 - Japanese: include considerate/ motivated/ lucky as emotional states
 - Ifaluk/ Fulani: emotion words describe the situation not the experience
 - Samoa: emotion describes relationship between a person and an event
 - Tahiti/ China: negative emotional states described as an illness



What about Universality now??

- What about the basic emotions?
- They should occur everywhere, right?

CULTURE AND EMOTION 63

TABLE 3.1 English Emotion Words "Missing" in Other Languages (Summarized from Russell, 1991).

Sublime	Surprise	Guilt	Love	Anxiety	Depression
Chewong (Malaysia)	Chewong (Malaysia)	Chewong (Malaysia)	Nurba (Borneo)	Lalimo (Malaysia)	Chewong (Malaysia)
Tahiti	Haka (Micronesia)	Haka (Micronesia)		Mechiwanga (Pana)	Ekimo (Ethiopia)
				Yandaa (Nigeria)	
					Kulak (New Guinea)
					Malay
					Mandarin
					Xhosa (Africa)
					Yoruba (Nigeria)
					Yoruba (Nigeria)

James Russell, 1991 – review of ethnographies

Can feel what we can't say?

- Sapir-Whorf hypothesis
 - We can only experience that which we have words for
 - Some emotions in some cultures won't exist
- Seems to be too strongly stated
- However, language does FOCUS our attention toward what we can describe
 - Less likely to focus on emotions we lack words for
 - Less likely to discuss and clarify those emotions
 - Less likely to include concepts on the cultural understanding of experience
- Perception is not impacted by language/ but experience is



Words... words... words

- People living in snow have more words for snow: European Sami People, an indigenous circumpolar group, have hundreds of words for snow
- Hypercognized – creates a refined understanding of a concept
- Hypocognized – lumps related concepts
- Happens some with emotion words
 - Tahiti – 46 words for anger
 - no word for sadness

Shades of Blue

	Alaska	Alaska	Delta	Pine	Caribou	Caribou	Caribou	Caribou	Columbia	Columbia	Columbia	Columbia	Columbia	Columbia	Columbia	Columbia	Columbia	Columbia
Alaska	Alaska	Alaska	Alaska	Alaska	Alaska	Alaska	Alaska	Alaska	Alaska	Alaska	Alaska	Alaska	Alaska	Alaska	Alaska	Alaska	Alaska	Alaska
Delta	Delta	Delta	Delta	Delta	Delta	Delta	Delta	Delta	Delta	Delta	Delta	Delta	Delta	Delta	Delta	Delta	Delta	Delta
Pine	Pine	Pine	Pine	Pine	Pine	Pine	Pine	Pine	Pine	Pine	Pine	Pine	Pine	Pine	Pine	Pine	Pine	Pine
Caribou	Caribou	Caribou	Caribou	Caribou	Caribou	Caribou	Caribou	Caribou	Caribou	Caribou	Caribou	Caribou	Caribou	Caribou	Caribou	Caribou	Caribou	Caribou
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Culture & Expression

- Variation in the Intensity of expression
 - US – very strong facial expression
 - Japan – more subtle expression
 - Reflects differences in SNS arousal
- Appropriate situations for emotion vary
 - US & Europe – discourage crying in public/ encourage laughing
 - Japan – inappropriate to express anger toward family & friends, ok with distant friends
 - America – just the reverse
- Facial expression
 - Japanese & Russian – soften negative emotions with slight smile
 - Americans – do not do this

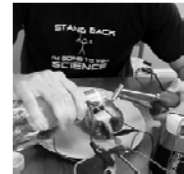
Costs of Emotional Masking

- US – where authenticity is valued
 - Concealing emotion leads to higher SNS activation
 - Pennebaker's work –
- Japan – where subduing emotion is valued
 - Concealing emotion does not activate the SNS



Limitations to Cultural Research

- Much is conducted on a few cultures
 - Care must be taken about generalization
- Much is conducted in two countries
 - Many countries have multiple cultures
- All cultural studies are correlational
 - Can't assign individuals to a cultural so we can't fully understand causation



Is Gender a Culture?

- US Gender Stereotypes
 - Women express (not experience) more emotion
 - More sensitive to others' emotions
 - Women are expected to have difficult with emotional coping
- US Gender Prescriptions
 - Females expect negative feedback when they don't express positive support for another's success
 - Females expect negative feedback for expressing anger/ aggression
- Actual Behavior
 - Women report more emotional intensity & express more emotion than men
 - Especially true 'weaker' emotions like sadness, fear, shame, guilt
 - Also true for other oriented emotions like empathy, love, compassion
 - When men express emotion – its anger, contempt, disgust, pride



Different Bodies?

- John Gottman
 - Research on marriage
 - Videotapes a couple in conflict & records behavior/ facial expression/ SNS measures
 - Men respond more acutely to conflict
 - Men resolve SNS activation more slowly
- How does this fit with 'lower intensity' findings?
- Susan Nolen-Hoeksema
 - Coping styles of men and women differ
 - Men distract & self medicate/ women brood & ruminate
 - Masking feelings impacts SNS by activating it
 - Negative correlation between SNS activation and intensity of facial display



**WE CAN START TO
ANSWER SOME OF
THESE QUESTIONS**

- What is and what is not an emotion? How are moods and feelings different?
- Is there emotion-specific physiology?
- • Are there universal antecedents to emotion? Universal emotions?
- • What is the function of emotion?
- Can emotion be unconscious? Can we control it?
- What is the relationship between cognition/ learning/ memory and emotion?
- • How does emotion develop and can we alter our emotional responses as adults?
- How can we foster our own happiness and other positive states?

